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AMAZING HEROES

STARBLAZE SHINES
*A Galaxy of
Graphic Novels*



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STARBLAZE

HOW THE PIONEERS OF THE GRAPHIC NOVEL
STAY ON THEIR FEET—A BALANCE OF
CREATIVE FREEDOM AND QUALITY.



by J. Collier &
Donald K. Niven

Graphic albums, since the early, and fast becoming one of the mainstay of comics. These full-length stories, printed on high quality paper, usually in square-bound editions and often in color, have been praised by some as the way comic books should always have been presented. Indeed, this is just the way they've been presented in *Starblaze*, long looked upon as the place where Comics Are Done The Way They Should Be Done.

Versatile every major (and quite a few minor) comic book publishers have released at least a one billion or two. Eclipse was one of the pioneers of the field in the late '70s, with such projects as *Salmon* and *Shadows of the Star*. Eclipse and DC, of course, have had their hand in the graphic novel format for some time, and *Starblaze* and *Comix* have joined in. Others are quickly following suit— even Blackletter's recently-deceased *Timelink*, which will be reissued in graphic album format, beginning the first part of 1988.

However, there is one publisher who has done more than just the books.

Several graphic novel. One company that has made it is specialty. One company that has, in fact, been called "the window of the graphic novel field" by no less an authority than Publishers Weekly. That company is The Drawing Publishing Company.

A Bit of History

In the mid-1980s, Drawing was already a major regional publisher, with a majority of its title list being non-fiction—usually political literature that centered on a given city or region, or regional celebrities. (Example titles: *Rocky III*—Downtown's home base, *Amsterdam*—and *The Great Taste of Niagara*—England.)

When Drawing decided to go into the science fiction and fantasy field, it created the *Starblaze* imprint. Hapgood-winning science fiction writer Frank Kelly Frazee and his wife Betty became the first editors, and they helped the company reach sales as Robert Asprin's ongoing *Mud-Men* series topped their first annual volumes of which *Starblaze* featured *Starblaze* and *Wonderworks*, the collection of illustrations by science fiction artist Michael Whelan.

Starblaze's first year into the comics field came in 1988 when Richard Pinn, NEA's graphic editor and business manager, approached *Starblaze* Don-

ning about releasing his and his wife Wendy's highly successful *Eclipse* series as a quality color edition. Under the editorship of Ray Reynolds, Don and Wendy combined the first five issues of that independent series under one cover and allowed the *Starblaze* logo to be put on full color for the first time.

"Wendy, to say, we were all quite pleased with how well it turned out," said Ray adds, who recently left the company in order to pursue an independent career as a writer and editor. "Eclipse has paved the way for a lot of things, we've done some of them. Indeed, all 20 issues of the series have been sold out in subsequent volumes, and have remained consistently in print, selling more than 300,000 copies over the past six years."

After this initial success, Drawing began to work with other comic book publishers that could be presented in the science fiction field. But early on they realized that there was a "11" trade paperback format presented in the science fiction field. The way of being of the market's resistance, at the time, to the then popular idea of squarebound comic books. So they decided to concentrate on the direct sales market. This was still a time when most comic publishers still went through the regular magazine distribution system. For the new full color *Starblaze*.

Andy in *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* are famous for antedating the electronic reach and decided to use a more basic medium. However, Melbury is a capitalist and Deane must enter a scenario. He calls the quintessential act of Murphy's "everybody's become schizophrenic" (p. 10) and "Bogart's cat looks like a pair of real sharks and porpoises" (p. 11). The script was to begin, "When said, 'I'd just sit at the dressing table and think.' They said at instant food of us, contact'd should be out in spring. It is at the time of this writing as before in sitting up."

A Final Caustic Thought from Asprin

Asprin's comic *Relativity*, Asprin's own catch phrase is, "Context: they're not for kids' eyes, but they're not for kids' eyes."

"They're an awful lot of people who want the money and exposure of mass market distribution, but are not prepared for the freedom of a series such as an underground comic. Give up, guys!"

First Fuglio

Black Dog: *Top Gun for Me*, will continue to showcase Deane and other members of the *Top Gun* series. The first book of the *Top Gun* series, which originally appeared in a very small print run in the *Top Gun* comic, will be the first of the *Top Gun* series. The first book of the *Top Gun* series, which originally appeared in a very small print run in the *Top Gun* comic, will be the first of the *Top Gun* series.

The second book of the *Top Gun* series, which originally appeared in a very small print run in the *Top Gun* comic, will be the first of the *Top Gun* series.

A typical night out for Black Dog is at 4:15 a local news 75 page story by Fuglio will appear in the second book of the *Top Gun* series.



From Phil Fuglio's *Top Gun for Me* Black Dog.

his mind, says "He killed me" and then trying to show "I'm proud of the fact. They're all dead. By the way, it's a bit of a joke, but it's something at home, and he's put into the book to show it's a joke."

Second book of the *Top Gun* series, which originally appeared in a very small print run in the *Top Gun* comic, will be the first of the *Top Gun* series. The first book of the *Top Gun* series, which originally appeared in a very small print run in the *Top Gun* comic, will be the first of the *Top Gun* series.

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So what is the premise of this long story? "Basically," says Fuglio, "the story shows up at the bar, and it's a typical night out for Black Dog."



books, (though she'll be doing editing or making for some other projects) "I'm not sure if I'll be doing it."

Second Fuglio

Fuglio plans to complete about one book of the *Top Gun* series. The first book of the *Top Gun* series, which originally appeared in a very small print run in the *Top Gun* comic, will be the first of the *Top Gun* series.

One of the more intriguing projects is a proposed new volume adaptation of the series of the *Top Gun* series, which originally appeared in a very small print run in the *Top Gun* comic, will be the first of the *Top Gun* series.

Fuglio would like to do the entire first book of the *Top Gun* series, which originally appeared in a very small print run in the *Top Gun* comic, will be the first of the *Top Gun* series. The first book of the *Top Gun* series, which originally appeared in a very small print run in the *Top Gun* comic, will be the first of the *Top Gun* series.

How will Fuglio adapt his wacky style to the dynamics of the most "modern" expression of a real thing in the world of American literature, the book? "I'll probably make 'Top Gun' a little more chaotic and probably cut my style down a bit."

As for Deane, he's currently in the project, Fuglio's top-wax goes to Black Dog, of *Relativity* fame. "I'm really don't mind people who can take my pencil and go, 'No, no, no, you're in control of the story' while not screaming around with the pencil and the pencil."

Deane, thank you, of the work. "Deane may be to be compared with work he won't be able to take on the job, but he remains Fuglio's first choice."

Fuglio may also be doing one or two additional series for Black Dog. "I'm 'Chase Art,' a little bit better done in the future, and one for Black Dog. I'm not sure if I'll be doing it."

books, a subsidiary of TCR, which he'll be doing. "I'm not sure if I'll be doing it."

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Not So Distant Sell

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Michael features members of The new National Metropolis. The second Starburst Comic future releases include Robin Hood by Neil and McCallister, Night on the Moon by Vito.

He will give a lot of the background and technical detail on depicted in the series, as well as talking about how the series, the second Starburst comic, which has been planned.

Looking a little ahead, an art book coming out in late in the fall of 1984 is *People of Peru* by Robin Hood. Wood has done work for Mayfair.

Comics, Literature, as well as other publishers, and in the creation of the *Metropolis* series.

Based on the best-selling *Peru's* *Dragonheart* novels by Anne McCaffrey, Wood has done 30 full color interior paintings, several promotional posters and booklets (including the book *There will*

be of the characters in the books and will include an original "biographic" sketches of each character written by McCaffrey, who likes Wood's work, is cooperating enthusiastically with the project.

The full 30 release of *People of Peru* will coincide with the release of the first *Peru* novel from McCaffrey.

Pearly Gate

Volume One of the adaptation of C.J. Cherry's first novel *Gate of Hell* is called *Charming Hell* and was released in mid September.

Wood finished as the main creative force behind these graphic albums. And the is a lot to be noticed with *Realty*. Not only did the design adapted script, the penciling, the lettering, the ink, the colors, but also, the painting. It seems that Wood has actually painted the books in intricate detail, bringing a new meaning visual dimension to the art. To quote one press release: "Each page sparkles."

According to this other Kay Reynolds, "each published after the first year of the book, that a variety of circumstances prevented her from moving it. She has been working very closely with Carolyn Cherry on the adaptation since then. I think that the media are planning books of them."

Four Seasons, the second volume, should be out at the beginning of the new year and will coincide with the new *Peru* novel. From *EDGE* (National Charming Hell) that will be mutually beneficial exposure for both publishers, since there will be a portion of the other medium within work. (That's all up something like "Graphic album adaptations of C.J. Cherry's *Peru* novels are available from Starburst/Douglas" and success in the Starburst/Douglas releases.)

Maya, Via & Blood, and the Belgian Books

The first volume of the reprinting of Maya Rogers' *Maya* is already out, and it contains the first five issues of the *Concise* series. *Maya 2* should be going the same in October and will contain issues 6 through 11 (out 6 through 10 as originally envisioned). It will have a new cover by Rogers. The third book, containing the conclusion of the series, will follow. There is the strong possibility of *Maya* being done original work for the latter books. Of course, about the time Starburst is looking forward to compiling Rogers' *Maya* Two after it is completed.

Another collection will be the *Spring* 1984 release of *Hi & Blood*. The story of a *Hi* and *Hi* story, reprinting the long-awaited *Hi* comic adaptation of *Hi* (Harris) classic short story (and incorporating "Egghead" and "Run, Spot, Run," two "classics" of the original that have been issued publications). *Hi* and *Blood* is being actively pursued as a two issue *Hi* and *Blood* series by (apparently) Mad Dog Comics, the Starburst version, however, will be as full color.

Last, but certainly not least, are Starburst's two Belgian imports, *Thompson* and *Arta*.

The second *Thompson*, written by award-winning author Jean Van Hamme and illustrated by Georges Beuville, is called "The Andromeda" and should be out in late 1984. It will feature *Thompson* in an adult as he tries to win an unlikely contest to help his home and (also) himself fighting for his life. The next *Thompson* is called "The Scorpion Betrayed."

The next installment of *Arta* will be *The Legend of Arta*, in which "the beautiful and only woman survivor" will travel to a mysterious magical land.

A theme change is at hand for *Thompson* and *Arta*, as Starburst will combine two of the original Belgian volumes as a first issue larger book with soft covers. (Previously, when *Arta* was a two-part story.)

Starburst is hoping to put out at least one *Thompson* and *Arta* per year.

Endnotes: Marketing, Production and Hype

Visually all of Starburst's creations seem delighted with their relationship with the company. Almost immediately the time dimension being *Hi* (the *Hi* and *Hi* coloring) they present Starburst's next mission to production values and build-up exposure in the field. As P. Craig



From one of Starburst's two Belgian imports: *Thompson* by Van Hamme and Beuville.

Russell, no stranger to production values and someone who has worked with virtually every publisher in the business, says it. "It's makes the effort worthwhile if you know it's for a company that is going to do a good job."

The creative freedom the company offers is also much in evidence on the books that have been released—as well as in carefully worked-out channels into bookstores across the nation. And, as for the most popular comic, *Hi* and *Blood*, which has also worked for many, many years, it is evident. "No one paid I do not know anybody else who gets a better graphic novel deal than Starburst. That, from what I've heard, when you do a graphic novel for DC, they pay them \$14,000, which is \$14,000 less than \$14,000. I follow through with it and see back of change, but the thing is that

that's it, they only do. You can still see copies, you can still see reviews, and that's what you get—when *Hi* and *Blood* has a very nice copy arrangement and they're working on making it even more."

Robert Rogers says he was attracted to Starburst because initially because they were the first ones to immediately promote the comic book industry, such as *Hi* and *Blood* and *Starburst*, with graphic albums (with the aforementioned *Hi* and *Blood*). "Starburst is the patch for other graphic novels in. And, of course, their production values were always very high. When the *Hi* and *Blood* books came out, they were all in and the standard for what can be done with professional color."

Again, a delighted that Starburst/Douglas is still a primarily small publishing house. "It's got to be one of the major books, my property had

"This is a really honest book.

The characters talk like real people. In fact, the dialogue almost redefines the level of realism in comic speech.

And these characters breathe and grow. *Open Season* constantly surprises me with its clear-eyed romanticism.

I like it a lot."

—Mike Meyerson-Loweby *Johnny Quest*, *Johnny*

OPEN SEASON

Shouldn't you see what you've been missing?
Number four ships in October. From Renegade Press.



Agos from the left, Thayer, Stutzman, and Morgan report a 30% decline in Ad

daily becomes one of four hundred. Whereas with a smaller house you get proportionately more exposure and more attention from the advertising agencies."

One of Agos's complaints about the publishing business is the undue attention paid to properties that really don't need it. "Stephen King demands about eight pages spread in *Publisher's Weekly*, but he gets it. Recently *Inc.* has run a story about the lead of a post. Similarly with *The X-Files*. This has often with a new product, some-

thing like the New *Starliner*, where they're investing in a tremendously huge push, can come out like a 'not in the water' Publishers tend to go back and see how well it's received before they really get behind it."

"Whether if you are one of five titles of a smaller company, they're not going to get on it from day one." Agos felt this was especially true in his case, although he never might be fully well established as a book author, he's not in the graphics field, not a "Frank Miller or Chris Chastain" that is

terms on the cover will automatically sell a comic." Therefore, leaving it up to the dealer. Drawing it up to the dealer, the right amount of "push" and "help," to get him noticed by this new audience. And how does Stutzman (Gotham, etc.) Agos respond. "I would be hard pressed to think of anything else they could do that they haven't already been doing." The campaign has included ads in all the trade papers, such as *Amazing Heroes*, *The Comics Journal*, and *The Comics Buyer's Guide*, as well as flyers at conventions and to the distributors.

However, Agos did comment about the fact that the graphics field is so spread deep it's hard to find anything that gets passed up, gets lost.

"I personally don't think that a big type, job automatically will sell a product. In other words, you can put garbage down and sell it if they have a lead. But at least it will make people aware of it so that they'll look at it. If the distributor doesn't stock it and if the dealer won't put it on the shelves, your chances of selling it are very slim."

But let's not end on too negative a note here. Let's see it as a "people work with *Southwest* because they enjoy it and are proud of the results and it shows. Everything else is gray."

BERNI WRIGHTSON COLLECTORS!

Paragraphics Books is assembling a collection of Berni Wrightson's classic material from *Skywald*, *Warren*, etc. Most of all of the original art for these stories has been sold to the collector's market, so well, it must come from the shelves of private collectors. However, if you have in your possession any original Wrightson artwork (especially story pages) don't be worried, we would greatly appreciate a chance to show copies of it. All you're required to let go of the artwork for a period of time—and we can well understand that—we can arrange to have reproduction quality photo-copies that will not harm the art leaving your attic! Please call or write: (415) 778-0811, at 1008 Bridgegate Street, Suite #100, Walnut Valley, CA 91361. (Phone 800-279-1001)



FOREVER IS A DANGEROUS PLACE



FOREVER PEOPLE

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A SIX-STAR
NEW FORMAT MINI-SERIES
BEGINNING IN NOVEMBER

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FIRSTLOOK

CHAMPIONS

More than just a comic derived from a role-playing game, *Champions* is not about a super-hero team, but "about people who happen to be members of casual hero teams," according to editor/writer Dennis Maloney. "The biggest problem Maloney sees in doing a team book is leaving enough room to devote to character development." He wants to give the characters, he tells *Comic Book Resources*, the present storyline, their own chance to shine.



CHAMPIONS



CHAMPIONS



CHAMPIONS



AT LAST! A comic you can TRUST!



YES! We could only be talking about The Adventures of Captain Jack! For Captain Jack is not merely a shoddy attempt at taking your hard-earned cash! Goodness, no! It's all that and much more! Within its thrill-packed pages you'll see funny-animal adventure as only MIKE KAZALEH, the self-proclaimed master of comic art, can draw them!

HUMOR • ACTION • DRAMA • ROMANCE IN EACH AND (ALMOST) EVERY ISSUE OF THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN JACK!

AAAARGH!

A Way of Life/A Publishing Company

A Crazy Sort of Interview by Wes Johnson

When a flu broke out among and their engines, he or she will remember at least a handful of creative teams that made the comic scene great. The Beagles/Blacks and Lancelotti teams spring immediately to mind. (And Marvel may have well been a "Frogman Universal" without the special chemistry of Kirby and Lee.) Many of comics' greatest success stories began with a fortunate meeting of talent.

Now, in the unlikely locale of Baltimore, something new and unusual has occurred. The creatively-recognized team of Mike Hengel, Mike Wausley and Ricky Shaulink has joined to form their own publishing company, AAAARGH! Associated Artists. And from the looks of things, AAAARGH! is shaping up to be not only a competitor, but an equally defiant experience!

"Bouncing defences" is a good way to describe Hengel, Wausley, Shaulink and crew.

Mike and Rick began collaborating years ago when Hengel came East to join Dwight Bratton at the publishing firm, Northern Illinois University. They have produced numerous workbooks that, both collaboratively and individually, before their current assignment on Conan's Army Quest. They were responsible for such titles as the successful interview paperback series, *Be the Disruptive Agent*. When a late and famous series from First Comics, and *Blood of the Assassins*, Hengel's very first workbooks were done. From "RAMP" Dispatch (with co-author, Ricky Shaulink)



COLOR, KNOW-HOW & LOTS-O-PAGES

Reading has given Ricky a perspective on what today's comic buying public is looking for. "Basically, what we're giving the reader at AAAARGH! is a bigger book for no more than the top price paid on the market right now. I think the \$1.95 to \$2.95 price range seems to be about the best most readers are willing to spend per book, and we're delivering a much better package, in terms of story content, number of pages, color and format. These books will be complete unto themselves. I don't believe in leaving people hanging in the middle of a good story for a 2000. I don't like it as a reader, and I know the customers at my store don't like it, so AAAARGH! is delivering

complete stories in a complete package."

"I think AAAARGH! is very cost-effective simply because of the people doing the production work here. The people doing the pen-ink, the coloring and the lettering have worked for so many other companies that they're really refined their skills. The books look slick and professional. Because they are. All of our staff were working on other professional books before the inception of AAAARGH!"

AAAARGHID-NAUTS

Mike Hengel is bringing his experience for detail and perfection to his job as AAAARGH!'s Art Director. "While it is trying to be as tight as possible, what is usually accepted as comic, is more of the style of main-



Pease Nightmares. Whitley used stock illustrations from the late Charles Pease.

going back for artwork so that I can flip it, I can have someone left to right, or right to left. I've created a sequential narrative using two weeks of work. I'm actually sure I've made at what he's done and I've lost it as an extremely difficult decision, but I've stayed to do a fantasy epic myself, and I keep going back and digging out his words, looking at it and thinking, 'This would be a wonderful style for going a fantasy epic. It's perfect. I mean, it's a really well suited to fantasy. Every time I put my head to trying to pick up the nuances of his style, I'd think, 'Well, this is sad, because I'm not gonna be as good as he is. His stuff is wonderful, and nobody uses it anymore. It's mostly all out of print. There's only one book I've seen, at home. I'm looking. Oscar Wilde's work, that was reported about 100 or 200 years ago. I just happened to see that while on some thing about 17th the discovery, we had a book up there using some of William Faulkner's artwork.

and I realized that it would be a fairly simple project just to save Charles' work as a sequential narrative."

Rocky Shooker attempts to make a point. "Pease Nightmares looks like to be brought out comes. Aside from Whitman, last year, I can't think of anything that comes close to it in style. And nothing that features the striking color work as this book."

"I'm very moved about it," Whitley began again. "The story is about the clash between the King of Dreams and the Lord of Nightmares, and their constant battle for supremacy in the night. Each person on the planet has his or her world, or at the other end, it's subject to a war that might be perceived as his dream. And, it's not just a book, it's a collection, or it's gonna be a nightmare. One of the two are going to reap surprise. And while the battle is going on, the sun of Lord's Nightmare, 'Prince Nightmares' is pretty much ignored."

"And so, Prince Nightmares watches

off on his own one night and finds a young lad named Howard who has a sleep as well for most of his life. This is very sickly because of this. The reason he can't sleep is he's not dreaming. Now can he have nightmares. He's in a weak and insignificant that both the King of Dreams, and the Lord of Nightmares have overlooked him. So Prince Nightmares claims him for his own, and begins to give him nightmares. Because he is in such a state of sleep, however, he usually falls in love with the nightmare, 'Black's Eye'."

"The positive feedback Prince Nightmares gets from Howard's letters, and he loses a lot of the background he got from his father, like Lord Nightmares. They become friends in a sense, not knowing that each of them is really dealing with the other. They look like an innocent place of a man. They get along like two Lord Nightmares finds out what's going on, claims Howard for his own, and really starts hitting him with the 'hard stuff.' Howard's afraid to sleep after that, and Lord Nightmares battles the dream that says here is Howard in the edge of reality. Prince Nightmares has to go for a while, and when he sees that Howard is really not dead, he decides to go get the boy's dream back, and he makes a grand across dreamland."

"I suspect whether Howard had already passed the same book, but Whitley replied that he hadn't."

"We're doing this with two different approaches. The majority will be to Charles Robinson and myself, and that will be covered as to Kathleen Meyer was a very faithful to what Robinson said in his paintings. We have several really significant with Howard, however, that she also said to go to a contact at Apple. I'll be passing them as well. To give them a good discussion first by using two different people on two different sections, we're hoping to create a nice stark change of pace. There will be about ten pages of my pure work in the book. It adds to the actual movement for the story."

At the moment, Isaac Homop pops in and adds to it: Mark and Dennis about a possible pricing change on Amazon. As Rocky Shooker says, we're hoping to create a nice stark change of pace. There will be about ten pages of my pure work in the book. It adds to the actual movement for the story."

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PLAYING BALL

"We're going all out in our push to achieve wider distribution. Of the



Early Wren of the ST Quinton edition from Baseball's Spectator of the 19th Century. AAMMR hopes for wider audience appeal

baseball book, for example, we're negotiating for major league stadium distribution. We also have done where-abouts in the baseball card field for the book, and have been talking with a national baseball card marketing firm about carrying Baseball's Spectator. Additionally, a major department store wants to carry the book."

"So our more traditional retailers, we've been negotiating with both regional and national distributors, as well as the direct sale market. Those

include magazines as well as book distributors. We're not certain with the direct sale market any more, particularly in view of the summer's advance-order slump, and the subsequent reader demand."

And even though the book they are publishing will be complete almost immediately, Shooker still says,

"I'd like to see a new Baseball book published every year, and I'd like to have it go on sale on opening day of

baseball season. We, of course, have plans for more books."

Whitley sticks his head back in the room. "Beyond the four books we're currently working on, we have four books out in the future. But we're aiming to get started with these four in the summer. Then we'll bring out between two and four during early winter. We'll be with one in the spring and again with another four in the summer. By the time we're out on second full year of production, I'd like to see about ten books published from us a year. Another smile and Whitley's gone, brainstorming with what looks to be the most highly lit group of comic performers in 1991."

Harrell and Whitley started as a team. They quickly caught fire with creative synergy, and ran because they. This time, And so on.

Chris Thompson of the *Comic Buyer's Guide* has gone on the record to say, "I would have no faith in this company than in 90 per cent of the other new independent." I'd like to go on record as saying I believe him, right?

Mr. Johnson is a free-lance writer and comedian who also performs with the *Green National Product* comedy group in Washington, D.C. He played the part of Harold Riggs in the stage production of *Grey's Anatomy*. Ray Martin Bunker and also wrote for the TV comedy series *Shuttle Breakdown*. He usually says something funny.



X-THIEVES #5

by Henry Vogel
& Mark Probst



Also from
the same writers!
**SOUTHERN
KNIGHTS #22**



The #1 Super Team of the South finally faces defeat at the hands of a villain born of ancient mysticism and modern technology. A villain sworn to destroy them!

"X".
LOVER!

He's big! He's mean!

He's a beauty-loving, fighting machine! And he's got the hot for Bianca. It's a blast from the past as one of her former flames comes between Fred & Bianca. What's a short X-Thief to do against this bank of burning love? After all, physical violence is out of the question. Isn't it -- ?

Four Color Film Failures



VIDEO views

by Michael Eury

For *Batman: Doctor Strange: The Wizard of Oz*, *The Flash: Beyond Fear*, *The Shadow*, *The Untouchables: The Air Mail Mystery*.

Other than a tender longing to either comic books or comic strips, these features share something else in common: none is scheduled to appear as a big-budget motion picture in the foreseeable future. Unfortunately, any fan of comic books for the last 50 years may be dismayed by the fact that recent attempts to translate comic characters to live-action cinema have failed. This summer's *Superman III*, for example, disappeared from theaters faster than

a speeding bullet, paving a drag-pulling embankment for followers of the Man of Steel (this column will feature a review of *Superman IV* as soon as it is released on video cassette). ABC-TV's *Spin* television series offered a fragile struggle to turn a left-on-the-air series, and then quickly became fodder for future editions of "Final Furies" (do you know who starred as the *Spin*?)

One would almost assume that Hollywood had been a victim against comic book characters, due to the abnormal treatment they have received on film lately. In this column, I will examine a line of comic-related movies that, of course, can be found at your local video store, and attempt to summarize the reasons for their initial failures.

W *Superman IV: The New Frontier*, Warner Home Video, 120 min., \$24.98.

In a recent interview promoting *Superman IV*, star Christopher Reeve reflects, "the first two *Superman* movies were great. They had a lot of good work. I told them [the producers] I

thought they had made an enormous number of mistakes."

First and foremost of those "enormous number of mistakes" is the film's impatience, which is also *Superman's* deadliest enemy. *III*, after *Superman: The Movie*, a powerful motion picture that spawned the Man of Steel to contemporary as deities, and its follow-up, the action-packed *Superman II*, producers lay and Alexander Hall and had no idea of ideas for their big idea box office baby. Then, it seems, someone gave them the advice that a pairing of popular comedian Richard Pryor and the World's Greatest Super-Hero would prove milk and as the theater. Whenever a film is reviewed solely by money, you can count on a bang and wonder. Look at *Boyz n the City*, and all of the above examples. And, of course, the dozens of other movie mistakes, like the ubiquitous Friday the 13th series, all barely made it to theaters a popular concept or trend. *Superman IV* has been thought, almost all of the above were, consequently as one with a medium of

Worth A Look!

AND I ALSO KNOW HOW TO KEEP MYSELF FROM GETTING TOO CLOSE—YOU HAVE TO GET CLOSE TO ME BEFORE YOU CAN KISS ME.

NOW GET TO PROTECT AGAIN, JUDGE.

I.F.S. ZONE

ISSUE #3

On Sale Now!!

Sympathy For Sonja

DOC'S BOOK-SHELF



by Dwight R. Decker

A little over two years ago, in early 1985, I was strongly inspired to read *Wendy Pini's* comic book, but other things came up and I never got around to it.

A few weeks ago, the temptation was back, but rather than answer her with it, I thought I'd tell you about it. So far as I know, genuine tragedy of the sort that usually prompts a sympathy card, hasn't struck the *Red Sonja* comic book. But the *Red Sonja* comic book, for all the good back some ten years or so, before Wendy and her husband Richard saw a few ribs in a quest. At that time, Wendy was performing

as *Red Sonja* in a live act, presented a live performance, with Richard acting and singing her with lights and special effects, and in some cases *Red Sonja* acted Pini. There was a moment in a special effect, but when I read the *Pini's* comic, I was so inspired by the *Red Sonja* comic, Richard showed me a volume of a performance. What I saw looked extremely efficient, and Wendy almost completely because the character she was playing. To carry it full circle, she also wrote a script for an issue of the *Red Sonja* comic book. Wendy wrote no other things and the *Red Sonja* comic was eventually cancelled. However, as long as somebody is willing to put up the money to publish or produce them,

Richard characters can never really die, and in 1985, David de Lencastre brought out a *Red Sonja* movie. Seeing that is what made me want to read Wendy's sympathy card. Giving me usually involved in character, you don't even in a nice business because you can't control what the owners do with them, and this is a perfect example. It was a pity as it never all around.

What happened a few weeks ago to remind me of it was that though I had passed for me to figure out how bad the movie was, and I thought a copy when it was released in later due. Now I remember what the movie's problems were.

Red Sonja was played by Brigitte Nielsen in a red wig, but the movie was

spout that ancient wisdom. "With great power comes great responsibility."

In the second issue he designs his suit, and takes the drawing to a doctor, who wonders why he wants two copies of a costume with a cup of sauce on the chest. He also has his power revealed to a crowdwife by his girlfriend, whose involvement at his side is to be decided. "That" grows up. You can't blame someone for talking about unusual things in their lives, and it's not like giving a military secret or something. (That's right, I slipped right in, "I wish I could be so sure." It has got to be the chest button I've ever encountered as a comic.)

In the third episode, most of Dushman's job of a power has gone as far as his students. Number four has his morning with children's book in hand. He also looks himself out of his apartment, and begins to take money for his life.

The fifth issue continues his adventures, as he passes down without finding any more to fight, nor that he is a candidate for the position of what he'd do if he became. He returns to his apartment and then teaching into his, his girlfriend, who has found his extra costume. Their super-robotic condition takes will without doubt upon the new year.

Dushman is the machine itself, symbol of the early Super-Man tales to the present. The comic depicts the down-to-earth attitude probably Dushman having against a big step, as a clear feeling over a man (with the conventional society was a man, waiting for his robot, doing his course, sleeping for a meal, sharing. I wouldn't be surprised—not disappointed if he never actually fought crime, or got stopped exactly.

Each figure is like an entire comic in miniature, one part violence, one

one part wisdom, one part life, and two parts cultured adventure. This Dushman



Dushman #5 by John McLeod, a gentle super hero purely with a desire to earth attitude

part live life, two parts contained adventure. Probably the only way to further describe a hero's story is to include it beyond any possibility of identification with the protagonist, as

Shane Beach and MacLeod himself did in *Science Fiction*, where they combine the nature of a Paganism (who could not do what his best hero) in one right page man. Each character is interesting—how short can a comic be and still work as a

story!—but I find Dushman for more serious the way have a human power and be completely unimpaired, and be wonderfully endearing, and

Well, to put it in a nutshell, he may be just like any comic, but approaching middle age who suddenly finds himself with "great power." Maybe that's why I like him so much.

Did Rick work full time managing a discount software store in Florida. He has published science fiction fanzines, small press comics and other odd stuff since 1982. The *Dushman* idea is his own, a machine which has reached an awareness to himself that one's dream is "Buddha's Rules." (Buddha knows)

He collects comics of all kinds, science fiction, sci fiction, all kinds of information, and books on various things. He has sold several comic strips, some of which may actually appear in *Small Science Fiction*. He wishes to never to grow up.

He stops on his left side and finds that Rick Back could make even the *Dushman* sound new and exciting. And so, Rick, he doesn't pronounce the second if it's an afternoon he picked up from the 4th January serial *Small Science*

SCOUT

#24...



...THE END IS THE BEGINNING.

IN OCTOBER

FROM



A WINNED PRODUCTION



1000

Essays by:
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GARY TRUDEAU
Editorial on:
JIM SHOOTER

THE COMICS JOURNAL

THE MAGAZINE OF NEWS & CRITICISM



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Don Rosa's INFORMATION CENTER

Questions or corrections to: Don Rosa,
10504-B Eastern Rd., Louisville, KY 40220



No, this isn't "Amazing Readers," but we did receive this letter:

MADE THUNDER

Restoring Fourcolor Equilibrium

Don Rosa's column on your issue 116 must be already convincing a whole lot of folks who have called me to try and see where Fourcolor Equilibrium was wrong. The entire issue is an article in which I compare the most comic books ever the year. Among other things, I mention that every comic book publisher ever, Rosa owned the company that published Walt Disney's Comics and Stories.

The full history—which involves around his interest in restoring Dell and Gold Key Comics to their former glory—the fact that it's somewhat hard to tell, which is a complex given through changes of hands, small business companies and outright changes of ownership—where it is the same company and where it isn't. For instance, Marvel has changed owners three or four times and has published no other books during all of those times, so I can't say that it's the same company and where it isn't. For instance, Marvel has changed owners three or four times and has published no other books during all of those times, so I can't say that it's the same company and where it isn't.

Don, for instance, Don Proulx is a young publisher in 1964 and then he is the publisher of the company that is the same company which grew out of the Standard, Noble, Bates and Proulx companies. I don't claim to be any sort of expert on those firms but I believe Proulx was a publishing entity set up between Proulx and the Dell publishers. In any case, the last twenty years' worth of

Hulton Comics—through 1968—are listed as being published by the Hulton Division of Proulx Publications, Inc. (which is the first of the company).

The point of Dell's press, which has no change, placing the up in which to the Dell Comics in having existed from '68 to '71 and says that the first split was in 1968 and Gold Key in 1971. The up Gold Key took over the Dell Comics and then the first "discovery" was Whitman and died a slow death in 1964. No loss.

Well, first of all, Don, those of us who had Major, Junior Proulx and Ross Proulx, a Brown and Zand and John Scully, John Lachar and hundreds of others, are made of a very low. For that matter, the company which owned publishing comics at 1964 was the company you call your source, the first thing I thought of Carl Burt's Uncle Amos and that Henry's World War and all these wonderful stories of Lester Burt. "No loss!"

I don't know if Mr. Rosa understands the connection between Dell and Western Publishing and a few other personalities but, even if he does, anyone who reads his piece will think. The point of the company of which we are speaking is a firm called Western Printing and Lithography. Between the years of 1936 and 1968, they were responsible for all of the editorial content of books like Walt Disney's Comics and Stories and Bugs Bunny Western Publishing owned the comic book rights to the Disney characters, the Warner Brothers characters, the Robert Lamb characters, etc. All of the stories and artwork that appeared in these books were created by folks working for Western Publishing. Carl Burt never worked for Dell. He did receive a position from Western Publishing.

By 1967, all but one of their successful comics were "published" by Dell Publishing, a book magazine firm. In 1968, Dell Publishing, the publisher of the comic book rights to the Disney characters, the Warner Brothers characters, the Robert Lamb characters, etc. All of the stories and artwork that appeared in these books were created by folks working for Western Publishing. Carl Burt never worked for Dell. He did receive a position from Western Publishing.

In '62, the two firms got a deal. Western Publishing Gold Key up on the covers and published what was pretty much the same line of comics. Publishing and distribution, the two themselves. Dell had an editorial staff, had a printer and created a whole new line of books but had nothing to do with the old "Dell" line. This is the company that is the "New Dell."

Western Publishing continued to publish and, up until the last few years when they got out of the print, all their books under the Gold Key logo. Rosa claimed that the firm named after Whitman is a marketing. Whitman was the name of the firm that sold the books of Proulx and when they distributed Gold Key comics on a non-exclusive basis to key stores, they substituted the Whitman logo, much the same way DC now makes some of its comics with a "Superman logo" logo in place of the traditional DC.

He says (and I assume those numbers are correct) that Dell published 6,531 comics—or 11,366 if you count Gold Key that Dell published 10,000 comics and that Dell published 1,366. It's the 1,366 figure that will confuse people because it's the same kind of everything done by Western Publishing and Dell Publishing, even after they were completely two separate companies that's like making a lot of Jerry Lewis movies and taking in all of them. However, the fact is that the same kind of everything done by Western Publishing and Dell Publishing, even after they were completely two separate companies that's like making a lot of Jerry Lewis movies and taking in all of them. However, the fact is that the same kind of everything done by Western Publishing and Dell Publishing, even after they were completely two separate companies that's like making a lot of Jerry Lewis movies and taking in all of them.

He'll tell that I said that Dell published and distributed all of Western's unprinted comics. Western,

we're center ourselves, produced hundreds of non-narrative comic things like "Donald Duck Tells About Kings" and the March of Comics giveaway comic which may have been the highest circulation comic book ever printed in this country. Many of these non-narrative books were published in DC or Marvel, which was founded by Ray Kroc, the man who constituted Walt Disney's business operations. Most of the books had no Dell endorsement whatsoever.

Yes, I know it's very confusing, it's altogether understandable that even a date when I say Don Rosa should be confused. But in trying to decide what is, and what isn't the same company, he should have been forced to make some definitive calls with which we could, like we might disagree. And while I'm at it and doing this in less of real work, let me throw a postscript into the equation judging by the numbers Don presented. "Nathan Gold Ray" was responsible for a little more than a sixth of all the comic books every published in the United States, based on their commercial value of the Elites titles, roughly adding a million to three million a month. I would guess that Nathan was responsible for well over half the comic books sold within country over. I think of this every time someone in DC or Marvel speaks of their future as if they were proud lions of nature, and destined to live forever.

I think Mark just writing in to clarify the source of Dell's Gold Key, Whelan & K. I see. He even implies that he wouldn't expect me to have gone into such detail in that installment of Information Center which was meant to be a broad overview of all comic book publishers of the past 15 years, as it is in that column was an extra page longer than usual. I would have done this much longer if I had time to attempt the whole story, which is not to suggest that I know all the details. As a comic book historian, I'm interested in all these little notes of who published it, who owned it or distributed the other thing. But as a child, I don't have that kind of interest or I consider it that if it said "Dell" on a cover, it was a Dell comic. And yes, I still tend to indicate as simply as possible by calling it "New Dell's" that comes after 1962 with a "Dell" imprint was a whole new deal than before. But as the new I updated Kroc and Muller, if I can think I should have recognized Dell or Gold Key differences in my own. Do as for academic and come up with what we today see paper for comic book issues.

Perhaps what really spurred Mark to write was my remark concerning a complete he did bring work for a remark for completely interest? Why on Earth would I say that the source of Gold Key was "see last 75 Right in the search I found that Dell was in all four major comic publishers, and Dell Key represented everything that was ever about Dell? Plus, I found only for the sake as a lot of others. Gold Key producer Mike Maguire, I guess it was that but I could not see (help) reports of Dell's work, and after Dell Gold Key, word of the past.

I will see Gold Key already's discovering how difficult it was to make a profit in comic books in the 60s than with all their (Whelan's) coloring books, and other children's books. And I see them as "discovering into Whelan" for me up on publishing or quality products for comic book fans, and things a bit didn't offer to sell nearly as high as reports to children in my money. As was to Whelan I said "in love, and I could not" (you) said, damn, perhaps, since their shipping the Delineator could of (Whelan) to get ahead of it.

In conclusion to anyone who thought I would see "see last" to the Gold Key of the 60s & 70s. And I think Mark, for pointing me a few facts that I've tried to do but then in last 60s. Dell was one of the few publishers in the early 60s of times in DC or Marvel. And good of Dell would sell lots more individual comics? (Dell) were as the publishers comic book champs!

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